

February 28, 2012

RE: Response to Yesler Terrace Tree Preservation Plan

Mr. Dave LaClergue

On February 16, 2012 the Department of Planning and Development released several pieces of draft legislation related to the redevelopment of Yesler Terrace. The Urban Forestry Commission has reviewed the tree protection documents related to this legislative package and have the following comments/suggestions.

First, we appreciate DPD's attempts to fully document the status of trees on the Yesler Terrace site and to ensure the protection of existing 'exceptional' trees (tier I and tier II). We also commend your efforts to ensure the planting of comparable new trees as part of the overall design process.

Second, we would like to see documentation of the existing percent tree canopy of the Yesler terrace site, the proposed percent tree canopy cover post development and a brief discussion as to how these tree canopy cover percents relate to the Urban Forest Management Plan goals. This could be achieved by updating the Director's report.

Third, healthy 'exceptional' trees that fall into the Tier III category that will be removed as part of the development process should still be replaced with "size and species determined by DPD to have canopy cover potential at least equal to the tree that was removed." Even though these trees have been pre-identified as in conflict with the development process we still feel their loss needs to be mitigated. The replacement trees could be off-site and a cost sharing plan could be added to minimize the financial burden to the developer.

Fourth, a bond should be established to ensure that all Tier I and Tier II trees that are to be preserved and protected survive at least 5 years after development. Specifics of the bond agreement should be negotiated by DPD and a qualified staff arborist.

Fifth, a bond should be established to ensure the survival of newly planted trees within the Yesler Terrace Development for at least five years after construction is complete. Specifics of the bond agreement should be negotiated by DPD and a qualified staff arborist.

Sixth, we would request a transparent process during the event a developer requests a permit to remove an exceptional tree as part of the development process. This

transparency should require at least one public hearing and an independent arborist evaluation of the developer's arborist report.

Seventh, there are many exceptional trees as part of the Yesler Terrace site and therefore many opportunities for these trees to be damaged during the construction process. The Commission has taken public testimony and received communication documenting compromised protection methods during construction at other sites in the city and we want to ensure that this does not happen at the Yesler Terrace site. We ask that the Commission be updated frequently with arborist inspections reports documenting the status of tree protection methods and any actions that the city takes to correct improper or compromised tree protection efforts at Yesler Terrace.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment and please contact us with any questions you may have. We look forward to continuing to work with your Department and our citizens to ensure protection and enhancement of our urban forest during the Yesler Terrace redevelopment.

Sincerely,